NEW NICK CARTER WEEKLY

Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1897 by Street & Smith, in the office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C.
Entered as second class matter at the New York, N. Y., Post Office.
Issued weekly. Subscription price, $2.50 per year. July 3, 1897.

No 27. STREET & SMITH, Publishers. NEW YORK. 29 Rose St., N. Y. 5 Cents.

TRIM IN KANSAS CITY.

OR, THE DETECTIVE'S EXPERIMENT IN SECOND SIGHT.

TRIM SUDDENLY CATCHES THE WOMAN'S HAND, HALF RISES AND FIRES A REVOLVER AT THE CURTAINS.

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Trim in Kansas City;

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THE DETECTIVE'S EXPERIMENT IN SECOND SIGHT.

By the Author of "NICK CARTER."

CHAPTER I.

TWO TELEGRAMS.

"Kansas City, Mo., May, 189—
Trimble Carter, Auditorium Hotel, Chicago—
Murder! Will you take it? Answer quick. J. V. Dent."

The young man to whom this telegram was addressed had just made a difficult three-carom shot on a table in the Auditorium billiard room.

The friend against whom he was playing rapped his cue hard upon the floor by way of applause.

Trim took the manilla envelope from the hand of the messenger and holding it crushed in his palm, tried to follow up his good shot with another.

"That telegram may be important," suggested his friend.

"Charlie," Trim responded solemnly, "I don't know of anything so important at just this minute as to show you how to make this play."

"I'll be mighty glad to learn how," was the response, "for it's a shot that would stump me, and I bet you miss it. Even up now, what do you say?"

"I don't believe in betting," Trim answered slowly, as he measured the angles on the cushions with his eyes, "unless you're dead sure to win."

With this he hit the ball a hard stroke, saw it carom lightly on the white, go clear around the table, taking three cushions and just miss the red by a hair's breadth.

"It was a good shot, just the same," said Charles Gordon, his companion, as he prepared to play from the position that Trim had left him. "It came very near making."

"Nears don't count," remarked Trim, indifferently, as he opened the manilla envelope and read the telegram.

The few words it contained interested him a good deal, and he continued staring at the paper until Gordon had finished his play.

"Any answer?" asked the messenger who stood by, waiting to have his delivery book signed.

Trim signed the book and told the messenger he would send his reply at another time; then he tossed the telegram to his friend and picking up his cue resumed his play.

"Well," said Gordon, "this seems to be in your line and I believe you said that you might be called away at any time by important business."

"Yes," Trim responded, "I'm always liable to be put to work somewhere, but you can't speak of a murder as anything that was expected, you know."

"Of course not, but murders are happening all the time, and this doesn't surprise you, does it?"

"Oh, no! but I can't think for the life of me who this J. V. Dent is."

"Somebody who has heard of you perhaps."

"Maybe."

"Are you going to go?"

"I am thinking about it."

"I'd like to bet a hundred to one that you go."

"I reckon you'd win if you did, but I've got to think it over a little. I'm on a leave of absence, you know."

"Yes," said Gordon, with a laugh, "and the biggest part of it has already been put into work."

"True enough, but it was good fun and it paid."

Gordon's remark referred to a case that Trim had become engaged in while on his way from New York to Chicago to visit his friend.

This had involved the discovery of an express car that had mysteriously disappeared from a railroad and the rearrest of a man named Daniel Doane, alias John Dowd, whom Trim had previously locke up for another crime in New York.

Dowd had escaped from New York after Trim had finished with his case, and the recapture of the man had been attended with great difficulties and peril.

At the conclusion of this matter, which has been described in "Trim on the road," No. 26 of this library, Trim had resumed his journey to Chicago and had now been there three days passing the time pleasantly with one of his former school companions.

Gordon was a wealthy young fellow who had led a rather quiet life and who was very much interested in Trim because of the young detective's constant activity.

After Trim's last play he left the balls in good position and Gordon quickly ran out.

"If you gave as much time to billiards as detective work, Trim," he said as he put up his cue, "I guess you could do me up, but as it is, you'd better take a lesson or two before you tackle me again."

Trim did not seem to hear.

"I presume this man Dent," he remarked as if speaking to himself, may have sent on to Nick, and that Nick, being busy or knowing that I was nearer Kansas City than he is, telegraphed him to address me here.

"He might have said so in his telegram easily enough, but from the looks of it it seems that Dent is a man of few words; certainly nothing could be clearer than this short dispatch."

"Have you finished, gentlemen?" asked one of the employees, coming up.

"Yes," Trim responded. "I believe I lost. Here's the price."

He handed the employee some money and then continued speaking, half to Gordon and half to himself.

"I don't suppose there's any good reason why I should hesitate about taking

this case. Murder is a serious matter——"

"And there's generally a good fee for working up such a thing, isn't there?" interrupted Gordon.

"Oh, sometimes, but that doesn't really make any difference; of course I work for money and I'm going to get as much as I can fairly, but if the case interested me I wouldn't let the smallness of the fee stand in my way. It wasn't that."

"Well, what is it then that makes you hesitate?"

"Let's go into the reading-room," Trim answered, "and look over the morning papers."

They did so, Gordon wondering somewhat at the course Trim was taking.

The detective got all the morning papers together and gave a part of them to his companion.

"Look through every column," he said, "and see if you can find anything from Kansas City."

Both spent several minutes in this work and found several dispatches from the western town, but not one of them contained any hint of the murder.

"Two o'clock in the afternoon," said Trim. "This message was filed at about one.

"The murder may not have occurred until this morning; perhaps it had only just taken place.

"Come to think of it, my name has been in the papers in connection with that Michigan matter lately, and it might have been easy for this man, Dent, to know where I was staying.

"I reckon that the murder was committed some time this forenoon, and that he lost no time in trying to get a detective on the matter.

"That speaks well for Dent. I must see when the next train goes to Kansas City."

"Then you're going to take the case, are you?"

"Yes, I think I will."

"Then I want to ask a favor of you."

"What is it, Charley?"

"Let me go along?"

"Why of course I shall be glad to have you do so, but you mustn't think that I'm going to let you get into any scrape.

"If it's a case that involves danger I'll have you locked up before letting you take any risks."

"I'm not a detective," responded Gordon, "but I reckon I know how to take care of myself."

"If you can take care of yourself as well as you play billiards, you'll get along. Let's look up the time tables."

They did so, and when they found that a train that would bring them to Kansas City before noon of the following day Trim telegraphed to J. V. Dent to say that he would undertake the case, and that he would arrive by the train mentioned.

The young men then made ready for their journey, a matter which caused Trim very little time, for he was always prepared to be on the move, and along in the evening they were taking their places in a sleeping car.

Trim had bought a handful of evening papers, and these he looked over as the train got under way.

There was nothing in them about a murder in Kansas City.

"Seems to me that's a little odd," he said, "and yet come to think of it, if a murder had taken place as late as noon it might be a pretty difficult matter to get telegrams into Chicago in time for printing in an afternoon edition.

"I guess the thing is all right; anyhow, we'll know to-morrow morning, for long before we get to Kansas City we shall be able to buy morning papers and they'll tell us a good deal about it."

The night passed without incident. In the morning Trim was disappointed about being able to get newspapers, for some

accident had happened in the delivery of morning papers at one of the few stations they stopped at and none came on board.

The young men had breakfast sent to them from the buffet car and while they were eating it a porter entered and cried:

"Trimble C. Carter!" at the same time holding up a manilla envelope.

"Hello, there's another message for you," said Gordon.

"Hush!" answered Trim, under his breath, "you take it and open it."

Accordingly as the porter passed up the car looking for anybody who should acknowledge the name of Carter, Gordon held out his hand.

"Are you Trimble C. Carter, sah?" asked the darkey.

Gordon nodded and took the telegram.

"It was delivered just as the train left the last station, sah," said the porter.

Gordon gave the darkey a quarter and the porter passed on.

"See here, Trim," said Gordon, with a wink, "did you ask me to receive this telegram so as to make me give the porter the tip?"

"You know better than that," Trim responded. "Open the dispatch and when you've read it show it to me as if the thing belonged to you and you simply wanted me to see it."

Gordon did so, and when Trim received the telegram he read:

"Trimble C. Carter, on board train No. 69.

"Can't meet you at station, go to Midland hotel; will call there toward evening. J. V. Dent."

Trim handed the telegram back to Gordon, saying:

"Put it in your pocket; I'll pay the breakfast bill to make up for the tip you gave the porter."

"You won't do anything of the kind."

"Well, then, we'll toss for it. What do you think of the dispatch?"

"Think of it?" returned Gordon. "Why, it's plain enough, isn't it?"

"He uses more words than he did yesterday," Trim responded, as he looked out of the window.

After a moment of silence Gordon leaned forward and said:

"Trim, I'm burning with curiosity to know why you asked me to receive that telegram."

"I thought it would do no harm," Trim replied, "for us to exchange identities for a short time."

"Of course there's no harm done," said Gordon, "but you must have had reason for it."

"Yes, an absurd reason, perhaps, but one that a detective always obeys if he can.

"It's just this way, Charley; I'm going on to Kansas City to undertake a case that I know nothing about for a man that I've never heard of.

"I've got to be constantly on the lookout lest some trick be played that will be to my disadvantage.

"Now I have no reason to suspect any trick in this matter, but I have always found it safer to go ahead on the theory that the people I'm trying to run down are on to me and are doing their best to put obstacles in my way; so I take precautions again and again that might seem absurd to other men and oftentimes they are unnecessary precautions.

"But once in a while it proves that I acted wisely, so in this case you see when the porter came in and sung out my name I knew that everybody in the car heard it.

"How do I know but that somebody in this car knows who Trimble C. Carter is and is very anxious to get a sight of him?

"I'd rather that that person, if there should be any one here of that kind, didn't see me to know me; so I got you to take the telegram and perhaps at this moment you are being studied by some

clever crook who takes you for a detective."

Gordon looked greatly amused.

"I understand now," he said, "but I must say I think the precaution was uncalled for. The idea that any of these people could be crooks!"

"You never can tell," Trim answered. "Of course the chances are a thousand to one that the little dodge was unnecessary, but it has done no harm, and I'd rather take that one chance in the thousand, that it might be a good move."

"Well, it makes me feel quite important," added Gordon, "to think that I'm posing as the famous young detective, but I can't say that I've observed that anybody has looked at me with new interest since your name was called, and I received your telegram."

"I suppose that's a stab at me," said Trim.

"I didn't intend it so," said Gordon. "I don't know what you mean."

"Why," answered Trim, "if nobody is looking curiously at you it shows that nobody here has ever heard of Trim Carter; don't you catch on?"

"Oh, yes, and I guess you have to admit, Trim, that on this occasion your name didn't attract any attention."

"I don't admit it."

"So?"

"Decidedly not. The lady sitting on the other side of the car five seats down was interested enough in Trimble Carter to look around and see who received that telegram."

Gordon stared. Trim was sitting with his back to the engine, and the lady he referred to therefore was behind him.

"I suppose you didn't notice," Trim said, "that as the porter came through the car with the telegram I was digging a cinder out of my eye?"

"I do remember that you were rubbing your eye; but what about it?"

"I held this little mirror in my palm at that time and saw the interest the lady showed in the receiver of the telegram."

"Oh! then you must be highly flattered."

"I am, and you might tell me if during the rest of the journey that same woman looks at you again."

"I will, but of course you don't suspect her——"

"Suspect nothing! I'm simply curious myself."

The conversation then drifted to other matters, and in the course of time they arrived in Kansas City.

They went directly to the Midland hotel, where Trim wrote both their names upon the hotel register.

They were then assigned to rooms and Trim asked the clerk if any message had been left for Mr. Carter or if anybody had called to see him.

The clerk said that there had been no message or inquiry.

Trim said nothing to this, but went to another part of the office where newspapers were kept on file and examined the Kansas City morning papers.

Not one of them had anything about a murder.

CHAPTER II.

GORDON'S LONG NIGHT.

"I don't like the looks of this," he said to himself. "From the start I've felt that there was something queer about it, but haven't been able to say why.

"Now it may be all right yet, for it is possible that a murder has been committed under such mysterious circumstances that no one but those immediately concerned know anything about it, and it is also possible that this Mr. Dent, who has sent for me, may be keeping the matter quiet so that I may get at the investigation without being bothered by the efforts of local police and reporters to discover the facts.

"Anyhow, there is nothing to do but wait and see Dent. He may live at a distance from town, and it is easy to imagine any number of reasons to account for his not coming to see me until evening."

"Is everything satisfactory, Trim?" asked Gordon, who had also been looking through the papers for an account of the murder.

"Not exactly," Trim answered, "but we shall know more about it by and by. Let's go out and see the town."

Gordon agreed to this willingly, and for several hours they drove about Kansas City enjoying themselves as if there was no business on hand.

When they returned to the hotel Trim found a note waiting for him. It had been left by a district messenger boy, the clerk said, and it read as follows:

"Dear Sir: I may not be able to call on you as early as I expected, but nothing will be lost by the delay. This matter is of the greatest importance, and I hope you will not leave town before I succeed in seeing you.

Whatever happens don't go before tomorrow morning.

Yours, truly,
J. V. Dent."

Trim was really a good deal disturbed by this note, though he did not make his feelings known to his companion.

He was becoming more and more suspicious every moment that no crime had been committed, or that if one had been that it was of the darkest kind and one that might prove more important to him than any case he had ever undertaken.

It was this, that is a conviction that the matter concerned himself very closely that induced him to remain on in Kansas City instead of taking the night train back to Chicago.

He felt that he was already in the midst of a mystery and he wished that he had not permitted his friend to come along with him.

"I'll tell you what it is, Charley," he said while they were at supper, "this case, wha ever it is, seems bound to make me work alone, and you'll have to excuse me if I can't pass the evening with you."

"Why, that's all right, Trim," responded Gordon, promptly; "this is business for you and you mustn't let me stand in the way of it for a minute.

"I was going to suggest that we take in a theatre; there are two or three good shows in town——"

"I can't think of it!" interrupted Trim.

"All right, then, I'll go alone. When shall I see you?"

"In the morning, of course, and if I happen to be in the hotel I'll watch for you after the theatre. If nothing happens we might have another game of billiards."

"I'll go you."

The young men separated, Gordon going to the theatre and Trim beginning a quiet and skilful investigation as to the man Dent.

It did not take him long to find that there was no such name in the city directory; then he got into conversation with the hotel clerk and with other men about town who were widely acquainted, and with an appearance of no interest in the matter led the talk to such a point that he could mention J. V. Dent.

In every instance he found that nobody knew any such man.

He was in and out of the hotel during the early part of the evening, returning there frequently in the hope that Dent himself might turn up, or that some other message might come for him.

Nothing happened to throw any light on the case he was supposed to have, and about ten o'clock Trim put on a disguise and went out for a tour among the tough joints of the city, hoping there to pick up some information about Dent that could not be got in the respectable places.

It was while he was gone on this errand that Gordon returned from the theatre.

He looked about the public rooms in the hotel for Trim and not finding him, waited for half an hour or more in the office. Then as Trim did not return, Gordon decided that he would postpone the game of billiards and go to bed.

Accordingly he went to his room and prepared for sleep.

Perhaps it was because he was the companion of a detective that he took more precaution than usual.

Ordinarily he would simply have closed the door and got into bed without any thought of danger; this time, however, he saw that the door was securely locked.

It was like most hotel doors, once closed it was locked and could be opened from the outside only by means of a key.

It had no inside bolt, but that it was securely fastened Gordon had not the slightest doubt.

He put his key upon the bureau and then examined the windows.

It was a corner room and had three windows. Two of them were down and fastened.

One of these looked out upon a fire escape. The other window was down, but not fastened, and when Gordon raised it and looked out he saw nothing but bare wall between him and the street four stories below.

He tried to leave this window part way up in order to admit fresh air, but it proved that the cord was broken and the window fell of its own weight.

Gordon sought for some way to keep the window open, and finding nothing better, he propped it up with a lead pencil.

Having examined his closet and having found that had no door opening into it from beyond he drew down the curtains, undressed and went to bed.

This was about half-past eleven. Trim returned from his ramble about an hour later.

He, too, looked through the public rooms of the hotel thinking it possible that Gordon might have waited up for him.

The detective had learned nothing of importance during the evening, and he had no reason, therefore, for staying up longer.

When he found that Gordon was not in sight he concluded that the young man had gone to bed and went to his own room, which was on the same floor with Gordon's and next door to it.

Trim glanced naturally at Gordon's door as he unlocked his own. He saw that it was closed.

Having entered his own room he closed the door behind him and started toward the bureau.

In the darkness he stumbled against a chair and overturned it. It went down with a loud crash.

"Confound it!" thought Trim, "why didn't I strike a match before starting across the room. I'm afraid I have waked up everybody around."

If anybody was waked up by the sound, there was nothing to show it, for everything in that part of the hotel was as quiet as before.

Trim replaced the chair in an upright position and twenty minutes later was sound asleep.

Next morning he was up early, and the first thing he did was to inquire at the office whether anybody had called for him or had left a message.

No one had done so.

"I suppose it's a little too early for Charley to be routed out," Trim thought, and so he went out for a stroll.

He walked about the streets for a half hour and then returned to his hotel. Gordon had not come down.

"This won't do!" said Trim to himself, 'if he's going to travel with me he's

got to keep good hours. I'll go up and rouse him."

A minute later, therefore, Trim began to pound on Gordon's door.

"Hi there!" he called. "Here it is Tuesday morning, to-morrow will be Wednesday, the next day will be Thursday and you're not up yet.

"Come along or the week will pass before you know it!"

He expected to hear a ringing laugh in response to his summons and was rather startled when something very much like a groan came to him from within.

"What's the matter, Charley?" he cried, anxiously.

There was a mumbling sound as if Gordon were trying to speak with a gag in his mouth and this was followed by slow and unsteady footsteps across the floor.

Trim's heart beat wildly.

Was Gordon sick or had something happened to him during the night?

A thousand anxious thoughts flashed across Trim's mind while he waited for the door to open.

He heard a faint scratching and rattling, showing that the man inside had great difficulty in getting the key into the lock, then the bolt was turned and Trim, who had his hand upon the knob, threw the door open.

As he did so Gordon, half dressed and horribly pale, staggered back and would have fallen if Trim had not leaped forward and caught him.

"Great Scott! Charley, what's the matter?" cried the detective, picking his companion up in his strong arms and carrying him to an easy-chair where he placed him.

Gordon's eyes looked at Trim wildly and his lips moved but gave forth only that strange mumbling sound.

He pointed feebly toward the bed and glanced in that direction also.

Trim turned and what he saw caused him to shiver as if he had been struck with a cold blast.

The bedclothes had been disarranged, but not exactly as they would have been if a man had occupied the bed in an ordinary way.

They were heaped up at one side and from out the middle of this heap near the pile the handle of a long dagger was sticking.

Trim gave one horrified look at his friend, and crossing the room pulled the dagger out of the bed clothes.

"Did it hit you, Charley?" he asked, looking vainly for any trace of blood.

Gordon shook his head weakly and mumbled; then, for the first time, Trim became conscious of a peculiar smell in the room.

He would have noticed it at first if it had not been that he was so amazed at his friend's condition.

"You're sure you're not hurt, hey?" he said now with his customary coolness, as he crossed the room laying the dagger on the washstand as he went.

Again Gordon shook his head.

Trim made a rapid examination of his friend's body to satisfy himself that there was no wound needing a surgeon's attention.

Without a word he picked Gordon up, carried him to the bed and laid him down.

"You've got to lie there and be quiet," he said then, "until I can get something that will set your tongue going.

"You're all right, old boy, but be patient and I'll have you as gay as a lark in less than no time. Do you understand me?"

Gordon nodded and again his lips moved.

"Don't try to talk," said Trim, "for you can't do it. I know just what will fix you and if you'll lie here partiently for a few minutes I shall get it.

"Then we'll have an understanding of this matter."

Gordon drew a long breath and closed his eyes.

Believing that he would lie still, Trim took the key to the room which he found where Gordon had placed it on the bureau, and went out.

He hurried to the nearest drug store,

which, fortunately was only a half block away from the hotel.

Trim, recognizing the smell in the room, knew that it arose from a certain kind of poison with which he was familiar, and he knew also exactly what to get for an antidote.

This poison if given in sufficient quantities has a deadly effect, but when there is not enough to kill it half paralyzes the body and leaves the victim unable to talk.

As the antidote is a simple, harmless drug, Trim had no difficulty in obtaining a quantity without a doctor's prescription.

Having got it and some other matters that he thought might be useful, he returned to the room, let himself in and found Gordon as he had left him.

He then hastily prepared his medicine and held a glass to Gordon's lips propping the young fellow up as he did so.

Gordon had no hesitation in doing what he saw Trim wished him to.

He drank deeply, lay down again and closed his eyes. Trim sat on the bed and waited.

After about a minute had passed Gordon opened his eyes, looked up at Trim with a faint smile, drew a long breath and exclaimed:

"Gee whiz!"

"Feel better now, old chappie?" asked Trim, cheerily.

"Gee whiz!" responded Gordon, with another long breath.

Trim laughed and stood up.

"You'll be yourself in a minute or two now," he said, "and whenever you get ready you can get off that bed and tell me all about it."

"I didn't think I ever was going to talk again," responded Gordon.

"You've had a close call of it, Charley, but you're not in the slightest danger now; I know what I'm talking about.

"Take your time and when you feel perfectly easy let's hear your song."

A few seconds passed in which Gordon lay still, seeming to try to collect his thoughts; then he sat up suddenly, rubbed his eyes and began to finish dressing.

"I've had a horrible time of it," he said, "I heard you say it was Tuesday morning but it seems to me as if it was next year.

"No joke! I have really had the sensation of living for a year since I went to bed last night."

"That's one of the effects," said Trim, "of the dose you have had.

"It was partly hasheesh, and it makes time seem wonderfully long, but fortunately it doesn't destroy the memory of what happened during that time, so I expect you to give me a very clear account of what you've been up to."

"I'll try to," responded Gordon, "where shall I begin?"

"Where you left me," said Trim. "At that time you were going to a theatre. Perhaps now you changed your mind and went to some joint where you thought you could enjoy yourself better?"

"No! no!" exclaimed Gordon. "I went to the show as I intended and came straight back to the hotel hoping to find you and have a game of billiards."

"What happened at the show?"

"Nothing except the performance."

"See anybody there you knew?"

"Nobody."

"Anybody whom you had ever seen before?"

"Only two or three of the actors upon the stage."

"Anybody speak to you?"

"No one, excepting the usher and ticket seller."

"No one called you Trim Carter, eh?"

"Of course not! Why do you ask?"

"Because we changed names yesterday and it's my serious opinion that that accounts for the racket you've had."

"I don't see how?"

"Never mind, Charley, get along with your story. I think I've been to blame for getting you into this scrape, and when you've finished I'll do my darndest to get you out of it."

"Well, then," said Gordon, "I hung around down stairs for half an hour or so after coming back from the theatre and then came to this room.

"For no particular reason I took unusual pains to see that my room was all right, and, great Scott! it is now exactly as I left it!"

As he said this Gordon glanced at the windows, his gaze resting on the one that was propped up by his lead pencil.

"Did you leave the window like that?" asked Trim.

"Yes."

"Is that your pencil?"

"Yes."

"Well, go on."

"I went to bed, and I must have dropped to sleep very soon afterward.

"I was awakened either by a noise or a touch, or perhaps by both, at any rate, there was a hand upon my mouth, and an instant later I felt something forced into it.

"In spite of myself I swallowed whatever it was. I tried to yell, and I thrashed around in the bed with all my might.

"Whoever had hold of me was stronger than I am and had the advantage anyway, for he had me down.

"He kept his hand over my mouth so that I couldn't speak and the best I could do was to keep him busy with my struggles.

"This didn't last more than a second or two, I suppose, when three things happened in such quick succession that I can hardly tell what order they came in."

"That may be important," suggested Trim, "try to think just how they occurred."

Gordon was silent a moment.

"Well," he resumed, "I think it was this way. A low voice said, 'the stuff isn't working; I must try the other.'"

"Was that the first thing you speak of as having happened?"

"Yes, and almost at the same time there was a crash in the next room, yours, I think; it sounded as if the roof were falling down."

"Huh!" said Trim, "I reckon I know what that was."

"The next instant I got a blow on the head that stunned me, but before I entirely lost consciousness I was aware that another blow had fallen and that it had just escaped hitting me by striking the bed clothes that were tumbled up beside me."

"Go on."

"There isn't much else to tell. I opened my eyes finally and found that it was light.

"My head ached and whirled. I knew that something had happened and I could recall what I have told you, but it seemed a year ago.

"Nevertheless, I believed that you were in the next room and I tried my level best to sing out to you.

"With all my effort the loudest sound I could make was a mere mumble, and I couldn't speak a distinct word to save me.

"I was scared, Trim, and I ain't ashamed to admit it, either."

"Of course not," said Trim; "anybody would have been scared. Finish your song, please."

"Well, I couldn't make you hear and so I tried to get up. It took me what seemed to be a week to get across the room to the chair where I had left my clothes.

"I thought I was a month at least in getting into a part of them; then came your knock and voice at the door, and that's all there is to it.

"Meantime, however, I had seen that knife blade sticking into the bed clothes, and it gave me fresh horrors, for I knew that that knife had been intended for me."

"Of course it was—not!" said Trim, coolly.

"But it certainly was, Trim," insisted Gordon. "In my struggles I had tumbled the bed clothes as you see them and in the dark the man who was trying to kill me jammed his knife in there and so missed me.

"But it gave me a shock and it makes me shiver now to think how the knife was meant for my heart."

"It wasn't meant for anything of the kind," said Trim.

"Well, what in thunder was it meant for then?"

"Me!" said the detective.

CHAPTER III.

THE RETURN OF KAYS.

"What should," began Gordon, in amazement, and then he stopped suddenly and added, "but of course there must be any number of crooks in the country who would like to do you up."

"I reckon so," Trim responded, "and it is entirely my fault that you were put to any trouble in the matter."

"I don't see that."

"I can show you then. We changed names on the train and you can bet your bottom dollar that it was that little trick that threw the crooks off my track and made them tackle you."

"Well, it's all right now, Trim, anyway."

"No, it isn't all right and it won't be until I've got my clutches on the would-be murderer.

"I must say that I'm glad I came to Kansas City, although the job that brought me here was a fake."

"A fake, Trim?"

"Undoubtedly. In the first place the name J. Y. Dent is assumed, and I'm half inclined to think there isn't any man in this part of the country who ever goes by that name; anyhow, one thing is clear to start with."

"What is that?"

"Can't you guess, Charley?"

Gordon thought for a moment and then slowly said:

"It may not be the thing you're thinking of, but I can see that there has been no murder."

"That is exactly what I was thinking of."

"There came near being one, though."

"Yes, and that's what makes me want to hang on here."

"I should almost think that you'd want to get out of their way."

"I thought you knew me better, Charley?"

"I do, but I was thinking of myself at the moment."

"You shan't be in any more danger."

"Oh! I don't mind that, but I don't see how it can be helped."

"Well, I mind it and I do see how it can be helped."

"How, then?"

"I shall make my investigation into this affair in such a way that the would-be murderer will soon learn not only that the plan failed, but that the wrong man was attacked."

"Now, Trim, don't go to taking any unnecessary risks upon yourself——"

"Rats! Charley, that's what I'm in the business for."

"But if it will help your plan of work any for me to masquerade longer as the detective you mustn't hesitate to have me do so."

"It won't help, old fellow, for I can see that I must make a long and searching inquiry here in the hotel, and that couldn't be done successfully unless I should frankly admit that I'm a detective.

In fact I shall take exactly the opposite course to the one I usually follow."

"You mean that you won't try to disguise your movements?"

"Yes, that's it; I shall announce myself as a detective and play my little game openly, but I shall fool the would-be murderer just the same and don't you forget it."

"Hope you will, but I notice one thing in your words, Trim."

"What's that, old fellow?"

"I notice you always say would-be murderer as if you were already convinced that there was only one man concerned in the attack."

Trim smiled.

"There may have been more than one," he answered, "and we'll see about that pretty soon. First let's make out how the assailant got into the room."

"You can omit the windows," said Gordon.

"Yes, I think we can, and the only other way is the door unless the person was concealed in your closet when you came in. Even in that case——"

"There was nobody in the closet, for I looked in there."

"All right; but I was going to say that even in that case the person must have come into this room through the door."

"And in that case," added Gordon, "the door must have been unlocked."

"Yes, and an ordinary key was used, I think."

Trim crossed the room and opened the door; he examined the lock carefully and when he closed the door added:

"There's no sign that the lock was tampered with."

"So it must have been opened by an ordinary key!" said Gordon.

"Probably, and in hotels like this there are only two keys to each room; you have one of them—and the other—is generally in the possession of a chambermaid or the housekeeper," said Trim.

The young men looked at each other in silence for a moment. Then Trim arose and went to the fireplace before which he knelt.

He examined it carefully and afterward sounded the wall near it and tried to discover whether there was a secret door leading from the closet to the next room.

He came back to his chair shaking his head.

"What were you thinking of?" asked Gordon.

"I was trying to see," the detective replied, "whether there was any possible way for a person to get into this room except through the door.

"I did so because I didn't want to make a mistake by jumping too quickly at a theory. You see, Charlie, I'm convinced that your assailant was a woman."

"A woman!"

"That's what I said."

"Great Scott! but what reason——"

"There are several; the first is the method used in the attempted crime.

"A kind of poison was given to you for the purpose of bringing about unconsciousness. Now perhaps you don't know it, but detectives who have to study crime know that poison is a favorite means adopted by women criminals.

"It rarely happens that a woman attempts to shoot a man, and still more rarely that she tries to use a knife."

"There was a knife used in this case, though."

"Yes, but not until after the poison seemed to be a failure, and then it was so awkwardly used that I can't think it was a man who struck the blow."

"You must remember that it was dark," said Gordon.

"I don't forget that, but it seems to me that a man who was desperate enough to come in here with a knife for the sake of killing you would have inflicted the blow without stopping to give poison, and that if he had started the poison racket he would nevertheless have managed to strike straight when he did use the knife.

"I reckon that the woman was nervous and excited, and that she left the room believing that she had stabbed you to the heart."

"That's an ugly thought," said Gordon.

"Yes, but I wonder if it has occurred to you that you might have been done up if it hadn't been for the noise you spoke of that sounded like the roof falling down."

"I guess that's the fact right enough," admitted Gordon, "for as I remember things that noise seemed to have startled my assailant."

"Yes, and you can give me as much credit as you please for that noise; I accidentally tipped a chair over, but no matter about that—the fact remains that I believe the deed was done by a woman.

"That the door was opened by a duplicate of the key you have, and the next thing for me to do is to have an interview with the chambermaid.

"I must do a little thinking first in order to get up a line of questions that will surely extort the truth from her."

"What should the chambermaid want to kill you or me for?"

"Old fellow," answered Trim, "don't you see that in a big hotel like the Midland, where there are a great many employees, there may have been a new chambermaid engaged yesterday, and that she may have sought the situation solely for the purpose of the chance it would give her to murder me."

"Yes, of course, that's possible."

"I only say it is possible. It wouldn't surprise me at all if it was the fact, but I've got to work along that line for I have got to believe that it was the chambermaid's key that opened the door."

Trim began to pace up and down and his companion kept silent seeing that the detective was thinking out his line of questions.

"I reckon I've got my examination laid out all right now," said Trim, presently; "let's go down to breakfast."

They left the room and went along the corridor to the elevator.

As they came near it they saw the housekeeper talking with a chambermaid; the latter was in tears and seemed very much frightened.

They heard the housekeeper say angrily:

"Nobody will believe what you say, and you'd better find out where they are

we shall hand you over to a police-
an."

"What is the matter, madame?" asked
rim, politely.

"This girl is either stupid or dis-
onest," replied the housekeeper, sharp-
. "She says she has lost her keys."

"The keys to the rooms she takes care
?"

"Yes, sir."

"Were they the keys to rooms on this
oor?"

"Yes, sir. And she says she can't get
her work because she can't get into
he rooms."

"Too bad," said Trim, sympathetical-
, turning to the girl.

"When did you last have your keys?"

"Late yesterday afternoon, sir, when I
nished my work," the girl answered,
ooking from Trim to Gordon with great
larm.

"Where did you carry them?"

"In a bunch at my waist."

"How were they held in place there?"

"By tucking the ring inside my apron
string."

"When did you miss the keys?"

"When I went to bed, sir."

"Do you remember when you saw
them last?"

"No, sir. I'm so used to having them
there that I never thought anything
about them."

"Was your apron string cut?"

"No, sir, of course not," answered the
chambermaid, with a look of surprise.

"Then how do you suppose the keys
were taken away?"

"I don't know, sir; I don't know what
you mean."

"Why, it's just this, the ring that held
the keys was made of steel, wasn't it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then the ring must have been cut or
else the apron string that held it."

"That's just what I was thinking,
sir," cried the housekeeper, "but I
hadn't been able to put it that way. I
say that those keys couldn't have disap-
peared without her knowing it."

"I remember," said the girl, timidly,
"that early in the evening I found my
apron falling off. The strings had come
untied somehow."

"Oh, indeed, and were the keys there
then?"

"I don't know, sir; I supposed they
were."

"Didn't you hear them jingle?"

"I didn't, sir, but I didn't think any-
thing about them; I simply tied up my
apron and went on again."

"As if anybody would believe that!"
exclaimed the housekeeper.

Just then the elevator came up and a
hall-boy stepped out and addressed the
housekeeper.

"The head clerk wants to see you
below," he said.

The woman immediately went down-
stairs, after telling the chambermaid to
stay where she was, and Trim and Gordon
descended in the elevator.

"That shows one thing," muttered
Trim, on the way down.

"What shows what?"

"That conversation shows how useless
it is to prepare a line of questions; almost
the whole plan I had prepared for this
investigation has gone up salt creek."

"Well, but you've learned something
just the same."

"Oh, yes, I'm satisfied. And if the
rest of my plan goes up, too, I shall
simply make another one."

They arrived at the ground floor ahead
of the housekeeper and Trim waited at
the desk until she came down. He
wished to hear what the clerk had to say
to her.

"Mrs. Baker," the clerk said when she
appeared at the desk, "one of the porters
found these keys in a cuspidor when he
was cleaning up just now.

"I think it belongs in your depart-
ment."

The housekeeper took it and examined
the keys.

"It does," she said; "how in the
world could it have come there?"

"Excuse me," said Trim, stepping for-
ward, "where was that cuspidor?"

"One of those in the smoking room,"
the clerk answered.

"Are you sure this is the bunch that be-
longed to the young woman upstairs?"
asked Trim.

"Oh, yes, for here are the numbers of
the rooms on the keys and they're the
numbers that she had to take care of."

"I see. There are about twenty keys here," and Trim began to run over the numbers, examining each key carefully as he did so.

"I wonder if I'm mistaken," he said, presently, "number 31 doesn't seem to be here."

Mrs. Baker took the keys and looked them over also.

"That is so," she said, "there is one missing, and it is the key to room number 31."

This was the room occupied by Gordon.

"I'm glad the keys have been found," remarked Trim, carelessly, for that poor girl up there seemed to be very much disturbed about it."

"She'll have reason to be disturbed about it too," retorted the housekeeper. "She had no business to lose them and she'll have to account for the key to number 31, too."

Trim turned with Gordon to the dining-room.

"The girl can't account for that key, I'm thinking," he said. "But, anyhow, the recovery of the bunch upsets the rest of my plan for proceeding."

"You're playing in tough luck, Trim," responded Gordon.

"No, I think not."

"Well, I like your cheerfulness."

"I have every reason to be cheerful for the recovery of the keys proves another thing to me."

"What's that?"

"That there was a man in the case."

"Great Scott! first it was a woman, now it's a man——"

"Wait a minute, I haven't yet said it was a man who attacked you; I said there was a man in the case.

"He assisted a woman by attempting to dispose of the keys. No woman would have walked in the smoking room and dropped the keys in a cuspidor."

"I see."

"And it was a woman's act to untie the chambermaid's apron and take the keys—do you catch on?"

"I do, but I say, Trim."

"Well."

"All this is good reasoning, but if it proves to be true I shall almost think that you are gifted with second sight."

They were almost half way across the dining-room at this moment and Trim stopped short.

"I say, Charlie," he exclaimed, "but that gives me an idea."

"What does?"

"Your suggestion of second sight."

"How, I should like to know?"

Trim did not answer, he pressed his lips together, wrinkled his brows and walked on to his table, where he sat in such deep thought that Gordon did not venture to ask him further questions.

CHAPTER IV.

TRIM READS GORDON'S MIND.

After breakfast the young men went into the hotel office and stood for a moment looking idly at the newspapers.

Then Trim, leading the way, they strolled through the reading-room and bar to the billiard-room and so around the house until they had taken in every public part of it.

Trim was apparently occupied with his thoughts and one would have said that he not only saw nothing on the way, but that he was unconscious of his companion's presence.

The fact was, however, that the detective noted everything with the keenest accuracy.

There was not a person in or around the hotel at that time whose face was not stamped upon his memory and whose actions he did not study.

At length they returned to the office, where for a moment longer Trim stood in deep thought; then he said in a low voice:

"Charlie, all danger for you is past and I should insist upon your returning to Chicago.

"By this time the villains who came so near killing you in an attempt to murder me must be on to the fact that they tackled the wrong man; if they are not on to that fact I shall soon make them so."

"Now, Trim," interrupted Gordon, "I'm not exactly a baby, you know, and if there's any danger in this thing and I can help you, you must let me do it."

"I'm going to let you help me," the detective responded, "but I'll drop the case sooner than let you run any other unnecessary risk."

"We don't need to say anything more about that and I won't try to explain the plan I'm going to follow, for the plan may be changed at any minute, and you can help me best by not understanding it thoroughly."

"That seems queer," said Gordon.

"You'll see later that it isn't queer at all. All you need to do now is to keep your wits lively and put in a word now and then in a natural way.

"If you make any mistake I'll get you on the right track again soon enough."

With this Trim approached the clerk's desk and stood there for a moment until the clerk asked if there was anything that could be done for him.

"I'm not sure," Trim responded, gravely; "a very serious matter has happened, and whether you feel like doing anything about it or not I don't know, but it's so serious that I shall feel obliged to leave this hotel at once."

"Nothing wrong in the service, I hope?" said the clerk.

"Not in the ordinary way," Trim answered. "I suppose that you know that I am Mr. Carter and that my friend here is Mr. Gordon?"

"Well, yes, I had supposed so," the clerk responded, "though at first I must admit I had you two mixed up."

"Yes, and other people have had us mixed up."

"So?"

"Somebody who has it in for me supposed that Mr. Gordon was Trimble C. Carter, and last night Mr. Gordon's room was entered and an attempt was made to murder him."

"Good Lord!"

"I told you it was a serious matter."

"But it doesn't seem possible!"

"Murders usually don't seem possible until they happen."

"But how was it done?"

"There no need of making a long story of it," Trim answered. "Mr. Gordon came in ahead of me last night and went directly to his room.

"He was careful to fasten his door properly, and the windows, as you know, are so arranged that nobody can enter through them.

"The lock of his room has not been tampered with; nevertheless somebody entered it between midnight and morning, and made an attempt upon his life not only with a poisonous drug, but with a dagger also."

The clerk looked greatly shocked and raised his hand to strike a bell for the purpose of summoning a messenger possibly to give information to the police.

"Wait a moment!" exclaimed Trim, catching the clerk by the wrist, "my impression is that the least said about this now the better; but you can do as you please as soon as I have finished."

"Is there more to come?" asked the clerk.

"Nothing that need give you any trouble. I am convinced that the murderous attack was aimed at me and not at Mr. Gordon."

"What reason——" began the clerk.

"Never mind the reason," interrupted Trim, "I'm so satisfied that I'm right that I shall at once leave town, for having failed in their attempt, the villains will probably try again if I remain here."

"I'm awfully sorry——" the clerk began again, but Trim continued without heeding.

"Mr. Gordon has business in Kansas City that will keep him here for some days longer.

"I shall go as soon as I can prepare my baggage and I hope that your people at the hotel will make it perfectly clear that it is Mr. Gordon who remains and not Mr. Carter. I don't want him to be in danger a second time."

"Of course we will do everything possible to protect our guests," the clerk exclaimed; "and I don't like to think of your going away without having some steps taken to arrest these parties."

"Did you say that the lock of the door had not been tampered with?"

"Not in the least."

"Why, bless my soul!" cried the clerk, suddenly.

"What's the matter now?"

"Mr. Gordon is in room 31, isn't he?"

"Yes."

"And wasn't it the key to that room that was missing from the ring of keys found in the cuspidor?"

"Exactly."

"Well! well!"

"I suppose you see what that means, don't you?" asked Trim, sharply.

"Why, yes," the clerk answered, "it means that his room was opened with the key that the chambermaid had charge of."

Trim nodded.

"This won't do at all!" said the clerk, in a low voice; "that chambermaid must be put under arrest."

Trim shrugged his shoulders.

Gordon had been standing by and listening interestedly. At this moment he said:

"I thought, Trim, that you were inclined to believe the chambermaid's story?"

"It isn't for me to believe or disbelieve," Trim answered, with a significant glance at his friend; "the matter is in the hands of the hotel people now, and if they choose to arrest the chambermaid it is no affair of mine.

"If she is innocent she can doubtless prove it."

"I must speak with the boss about this!" said the clerk.

"All right," said Trim, "it will take me some time to get ready to go and if you want to bring the landlord up to room 31 do so; either Mr. Gordon or myself will be there to explain just how things happened."

With this, Trim and his friend turned away and went to the elevator.

When they arrived at Gordon's room the latter said:

"You seem to be proceeding very openly, Trim?"

"It's the only way this time," the detective answered. "Of course you understand that my talk about leaving Kansas City is a kind of bluff.

"I shall go, but it won't be long before I come back again; now, meantime, when the landlord comes up here, as he certainly will before long, the best thing you can do will be to tell him as you did me, exactly what took place."

"And what shall I do after that?"

"Simply wait for developments and if anything happens that interests you, take a hand in it; I'm pretty certain that something will happen that you'll enjoy very much."

"I don't suppose you'll give me a h as to what it will be?"

"Oh, yes, I'll give you a hint. here!"

Trim closed his eyes and held out hand. Gordon grasped his hand wond ingly.

"I give you my word of honor," s Trim, "that my eyes are tightly clo and will remain so until I have mad little experiment.

"You don't doubt of course that shall keep my eyes closed?"

"Not if you say so."

"All right then it won't be necess to tie a handkerchief about my he Now, then, Charlie, attention!"

"All right, Trim."

"Fix your mind upon something this room, no matter what, that I c touch or pick up. Of course you're not give me any information as to wh you're thinking of, but you're to ke your mind on it, that's all I ask."

Gordon looked around the room fo moment and then said:

"All right, Trim, I'm thinking something."

"Keep thinking of it!" exclaim Trim, earnestly. "Don't let your mi wander from that article for one instan no matter what I do keep thinking that article and don't say a word."

Saying this, Trim began to turn roun and round, all the time holding to Gor don's hand.

He turned around so many times th both were almost dizzy when at lengt the detective stopped and stood still.

"Got your mind on that article Charlie?" he asked.

"You bet," was the response.

"All right, come along."

As he said this Trim was shaking his friend's hand gently from side to side. Without any apparent hesitation the de tective, still with his eyes closed, turne squarely around, walked straight acro the room, stumbling against a chair as he went, and thus showing that he could see nothing, but going without a pause to the washstand.

There he hesitated for about a second, still holding Gordon's hand in his right and moving his left in various directions in the air.

At the end of the second his left hand shot down suddenly to the washstand and closed over a piece of soap that he held up.

"This is what you are thinking of, Charlie," said Trim.

"Well, by all that's strange!" exclaimed Gordon.

"Was I right?" asked Trim.

"Of course you were."

Trim opened his eyes and tossed the soap back to the plate where it had been lying.

"How is that for second sight?" he asked.

"It beats anything I ever saw."

"Better than going about with eyes open, eh?"

"I should say so."

"Well, that was dead easy, Charlie; it was like A, B, C.

"When I come to explain the mystery of J. V. Dent's telegrams and the attack on you I will show you a trick in second sight that will knock this one silly.

"If I don't it will be because something happens to interrupt my plans and to bring about the exposure of the criminals ahead of time; but that isn't likely."

"I must say," said Gordon, "that I hope your plan won't be interrupted, for I should like to see just such an experiment in second sight as you suggest. The wonder to me is how you do it."

"It's easy enough," Trim answered, "and I would tell you now except that I think I hear the clerk and the landlord coming to make what they call an investigation."

There was a knock at the door.

"They'll probably arrest that poor chambermaid," added Trim, hurriedly, "but I haven't any doubt that I shall clear her of all suspicion, so that she won't be put to very much trouble.

"I'm sorry for her, but she'll have to stand the racket for a while, because that will be one of the ways by which I shall hope to get on the track of the real party."

Gordon opened the door and, as they had suspected, the clerk and the landlord were there.

They came in at once, and, as Trim had directed, Gordon told them the whole story exactly as he understood it.

Trim added what little he knew, explaining frankly how he had restored Gordon to consciousness, and then went to his own room, where he pretended to pack his baggage.

When this had been done he turned to Gordon, and in spite of the appeals of the landlord left the hotel.

CHAPTER V.

PROFESSOR HELM'S FREE SHOW.

For an hour or two after Trim's departure Gordon was occupied with answering questions.

The landlord took the affair very seriously and reported it to the police.

The result of course was that every newspaper in town sent its reporters to the hotel and Gordon was repeatedly interviewed.

The unfortunate chambermaid was arrested and in the opinion of nearly all she was undoubtedly the guilty party.

Gordon rather enjoyed the experience, for he felt through it all that he was playing a part in Trim's game.

He had such confidence in the detective that he knew that Trim would not have left him to face all these inquiries if there was any danger that he should make any serious mistake.

Along toward noon, when the excitement about the affair had somewhat cooled down, his attention was attracted by a poster that a man was just hanging up in the hotel office.

It began with the words, "second sight" in big letters and then went on to announce that Professor Helm, "the world renowned seer," had come to town and would give a free exhibition of his wonderful powers in one of the principal halls of the city that afternoon.

There were then a few lines to indicate what kind of things the "professor" would try to do, and the announcement was also made that during his stay in Kansas City, "Professor Helm" would put up at the Midland Hotel.

Gordon was greatly interested. Trim's experiment in second sight had aroused all his curiosity, and the coming of this "world-renowned" man of whom Gordon

had never heard before, was just what he would have liked most.

"I will certainly take in the 'professor's' free show," Gordon said to himself, and then he checked himself with a queer smile.

"I wonder," he thought, "if that isn't some trick in Trim's game?

"If it is, I wonder how in the world he is going to turn it to good account in discovering the scoundrels who tried to kill me and in revealing the mystery of J. V. Dent?"

Gordon's curiosity was now stronger than ever, but he had not long to wait before a little light was thrown on the matter.

Shortly after noon an elderly looking man came into the hotel, accompanied by a servant, and signed his name upon the register with a flourish.

This was "Professor Helm," but although he was an old-looking man the disguise was nevertheless so thin that Gordon recognized Trim through it.

"Now that's funny," thought Gordon, "Trim is such an expert at disguises that I shouldn't have thought he would get himself up so that there would be any danger of his being recognized.

"I wish I could give him a tip without attracting any attention, for then he might go to his room and patch up his face a little and so improve matters."

There was an opportunity to give this tip a little later.

The "professor" having had his room assigned to him, sent his servant to it with the baggage that he had brought and then went to a table in the writing room and began to write.

Gordon idled about for a few minutes and then sat down at the same table.

He also wrote and when he had put a few words on paper he managed to push the sheet across the table so that it fell under the "professor's" eye, without attracting the attention of anybody else in the room.

This was what he had written.

"I'm on to you, old fellow, and if I can see through your disguise it seems to me that others will: why don't you take a tumble to yourself and fix up your face?"

The "professor" quietly thrust the paper that Gordon had written into pocket and shortly after crumpled another sheet on which he had be writing and tossed it into the wa basket.

He did this with a significant glance Gordon and then left the room.

Gordon promptly fished the crumple paper out of the waste basket and went his own room to read it.

"I bet Trim was glad I gave him th tip," thought Gordon as he smoothed o the crumpled paper, "and probably has written a lot of instructions here f me."

The young fellow was surprised an disappointed at what he found on t paper.

The "professor" had taken such a lon time to write it that Gordon suppose that the entire page would be covere with words; all he found was this:

"Take a tumble yourself, Charlie, an don't worry."

There was no signature.

"All right, then," said Gordon to himself with a sigh, "if he knows what he about it's none of my business and t chances are that he has made this thi disguise for a purpose.

"I shall certainly take in his show thi afternoon, and I'd like to bet even that will be the most interesting performan I have ever seen."

The announcement of a free show wi attract a crowd anywhere, and Trim ha had the town so plastered with poster that in spite of the short notice the ha chosen for the event was well filled whe the hour came for the "professor" t make his appearance.

The crowd was made up mostly o men, but there was a number of wome present also.

Gordon, who had gone early, sat nea the front.

At exactly the advertised hour th "professor" appeared upon the platform and began a lecture on the mysteries second sight.

It was a pretty good talk and Gordon was interested in it on account of the information it gave; but he was continually worried in spite of Trim's warning, by the fact that he could plainly recognize the detective's voice.

"This beats me completely," he said himself more than once. "Trim can disguise his voice just as well as he can disguise his face, and here he is prancing around in public with a disguise that anybody who knows him well can see through and without making any effort, as far as I can see, to conceal his voice.

"What does he mean! Of course the vast majority in Kansas City have never seen Trim or heard him speak and it won't make any difference to them whether the detective appears one way or another, but suppose that people he is after should be in the hall now?

"It seems to me quite certain that they will drop to him. Well, I suppose Trim knows his business, but it does look as if he were making a mistake!"

After Trim had been speaking for a few minutes in which he told several stories about wonderful feats at second sight that had been done in the past, he declared that he was about to prove the existence of this mysterious power, and in order to make it perfectly clear he said that a dozen or more of his listeners should come to the platform and act as a committee to watch his movements and see that he did not deceive them.

As he said this he looked the audience over and his eyes rested for a moment upon Gordon's.

The latter thought he understood the matter and accordingly he rose and went down to the platform.

"That's right," the "professor" exclaimed. "I'm here among strangers and cannot select my committee.

"That is all the better, I want those who are interested to come up and if they are strangers to me I shall like it better and so will you."

After a little hesitation one or two persons came up, and these were followed by more, until there were about twenty on the stage.

"I should be glad," the "professor" said, solemnly, as he looked them over, "if some lady would act on the committee also."

He looked toward the ladies in the audience, but none of them stirred.

"Very well, then," he said; "perhaps in some other performance they will do so.

"I want you all to understand that although no admission fee has been charged to this show, there will be no collection taken up.

"Of course I'm here for business, but I don't expect to take money at my public performances.

"All I wish to do is to show you the existence of this power that we call second sight, and then I shall hope that some of you may be interested enough in the matter to engage me for private work."

A man stood up in the audience and said:

"Say, 'professor,' are you a fortune teller?"

Trim pretended to be greatly offended.

"I'm not," he answered, coldly. "I don't pretend to read the lines on your hands, or to see the future through a pack of cards.

"It is a fact, however, that I have a gift that other men do not possess and I'm going to prove it to you.

"When I have done so you can see for yourselves whether it is likely that I can look into the future."

This was just the kind of talk to arouse the greatest interest.

If the "professor" could do strange things in public, everybody would feel that it was more than likely that he could do stranger things in private.

Trim turned at once to his committee and looked them over.

"I will experiment with one after another," he said.

"It sometimes happens that there are minds that cannot be read quickly and of course it will be more interesting to everybody for me to work with those who are stronger.

"I will begin with you, if you please."

Saying this he looked toward Gordon. The latter came forward.

"Do you live in Kansas City?" asked Trim, gravely.

"No, Chicago," answered Gordon.

"Ah! that is too bad; I hoped you were well known here. However, it won't make any difference, I'll make a beginning with you.

"Now, gentlemen, two or three of you come up and blindfold me in such a way

that you will be perfectly sure that I can't see."

In response to this some men came up and in full view of the audience tied a handkerchief around Trim's head so that his eyes were completely concealed; then a blackboard was placed upon the stage.

Trim took his position in front of it and asked any in the committee to produce a bank bill and show the number to Gordon.

There was some joking and laughter about this, but after a moment a bill was placed in Gordon's hand.

Trim stood all the time facing the blackboard with his back to the audience.

He now took Gordon's hand in his left and with his right raised a piece of chalk.

"Now then," said the "professor" sharply, "look at that number on the bank bill one figure at a time."

As he said this the hand in which he held the chalk was moving up and down and from side to side as if he were in doubt what kind of a mark to make.

Presently he made the figure seven upon the board.

"That's the first figure," he asked, "isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Very well, then, you needn't tell me any more about it but keep looking at the figures; as fast as I have written one look at the next.

"Ah! the second figure is a 2. Take the next one. That's an 8—" and so Trim went on until he had written seven figures on the board.

He laid down the chalk while the committee who had been standing and looking over Gordon's shoulder at the bill applauded.

Trim had written the right number.

After the first moment of hesitation it had been done at great speed.

"This experiment," said Trim, turning to the audience and still remaining blindfold, "is not as interesting to some of you as others I will do, but it is the quickest way for me to find the stronger minds among you.

"Now we will try another. Anybody can come up.

This invitation was quickly accepted by several of the committee and one after another Trim repeated the experiment, always reading the number of a different bill and doing it correctly and generally with great speed.

After this he said:

"Now, then, while half of you stay on the stage to see that I can't see what goes on in the audience, the other half may go to different parts of the house and hide any article they care to pick out in any place they chose.

"When that has been done I will find every article."

At least a dozen men started out into the audience on this errand.

One put a lead pencil under a seat, another placed an envelope upon a window ledge, another tucked a key under the edge of the carpet and so on each one thinking up the hardest task he could.

Gordon, who was more interested than ever, borrowed a pin from a lady sitting on one side of the house, carried it to the other side and stuck it in the sleeve of a man who sat there.

Both the lady and the man were entire strangers to him, but of course they consented to share in the experiment.

When the committee had all returned to the stage, Trim took each one by the hand one after another and walked almost straight to the spot where each article had been concealed, and found it.

The key under the edge of the carpet gave him no trouble at all, neither did the envelope on the window shelf.

It was all done so quickly that the audience had hardly time to wonder and applaud his success before he had started on the next trip.

All this time Trim remained blindfolded. It was Gordon's turn last.

"Now then," said Trim, taking his hand just as he had done with the others, "think of what you have been doing and don't let anything I do disturb you."

Without meaning to do so, Gordon thought of the pin that he had borrowed from the lady.

Those is the audience who had seen Gordon prepare the test expected that Trim would walk to the right-hand side of the hall where the man sat who had the pin in his coat.

Instead of doing this, Trim made a dash straight for the other side.

He went rapidly up the aisle and halted suddenly beside a lady.

He reached out his hand doubtfully, touched her sleeve and hesitated.

"Something wrong here," he said, sharply, giving Gordon's hand a little jerk.

"No!" he said, "I understand now; "you took something from this lady and carried it— Ah! I know now!"

With these words he dashed up the aisle dragging Gordon after him.

He went around the back of the seats and down the aisle at the other side, moving all the time as rapidly as if he could see plainly and stopped beside the man to whom Gordon had given the pin.

After the slightest hesitation here he reached out his hand and pulled the pin from the man's coat.

The audience broke into thunders of applause.

Trim pulled off his bandage and returned to the stage. As he did so he whispered to Gordon.

"I'm on the right track, old fellow; the experiment is succeeding beautifully."

CHAPTER VI.

TRIM'S TRICK INTERRUPTED.

"I don't see how it's got anything to do with the case you're working on?" said Gordon.

"It has, though, and don't you forget it."

"All right, but I don't see how you do it?"

"It's simple enough," whispered Trim, in reply, as they mounted the steps to the platform, "but the best part is to come; look out for it."

When he had arrived upon the platform and the applause had ceased, Trim stood addressing the audience:

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, having shown what I can do in a small way I'm going to give you a more complete proof of my marvelous powers.

"It might be said, perhaps, that what I have done here in this hall was the result of some kind of trickery that was prepared in advance.

"I presume most of you are quite certain that it would have been impossible to prepare any such tricks in advance, but if there are any who still doubt my power I would like to have them join the committee in this next test.

"I have just traced a pin from one side of the hall to the other, now I propose that a pin or a needle, or any other small object be taken from the hall and hidden anywhere within two or three miles of this place.

"You may put it in a house, or in an open lot, or drop it in the middle of the road, so long as you remember where you put it, I'll guarantee to find it and direct a carriage to the spot blindfolded.

"I suggest that four men be chosen to leave the hall and hide the object while the rest of you remain here, and after that as many as like can follow me and see me recover the article."

"Here, Mr. Johnson, you be one of the committee," said one of the men on the platform.

"I reckon I don't want to walk three or four miles," said the man addressed.

"There is no need of walking a step," exclaimed Trim. "You can hire a carriage, a dozen of them if necessary, and I'll pay the bill.

"I haven't engaged a carriage for this purpose because I didn't want any one to suspect that the driver was a partner of mine.

"Go out and hire the first carriage you see, hide your article and come back.

"What I intend to do is to send the carriage over exactly the route you take until I come to the spot where the article is hidden, then I shall find it."

People looked at each other with unbelieving smiles.

The "professor" had already done a good deal, but this seemed altogether too much, and many expressed their belief that he would fail in this undertaking.

While the committee were discussing the matter among themselves a man got up from the middle of the hall and went out.

Trim glanced at him but said nothing.

He noticed that this man had been sitting beside a woman and that up to this time neither of them had taken any part in the experiments.

After a time four members of the committee said that they were ready to go and accordingly they left the hall.

While they were gone Trim entertained the audience with other exhibitions of second sight.

It was really not so simple a matter as he had claimed that it was in speaking with Gordon, but there was nothing mysterious about it, and no trick in the usual sense of the word.

When Trim was much younger, and long before he had thought of becoming a detective, he had been present at an entertainment very much like the one which he was now giving.

It was given by a man named Bishop, who claimed to be a mind reader, and who also claimed that he did not know how he did his wonderful tricks.

Although he was a mere boy at the time, Trim did not swallow Bishop's claims at all.

He believed at first that Bishop had confederates who helped him locate the hidden objects and read the contents of sealed letters, etc., but after Bishop had experimented with Trim himself, and had succeeded with him exactly as well as with others, the boy went home and thought it over.

He was then convinced that there was no trick about it, and he was equally certain that if Bishop could do such things other men could.

Trim would not believe that there was any mysterious power about it, and after a good deal of thought he discovered how the thing might be done.

He experimented with his school-boy companions and found that if one of them fixed his mind upon a certain object, the muscles of his hands and arms would move toward that object unconsciously.

All it was necessary to do therefore was to take a person by the hand and notice which way his hand moved most easily.

If the person whose hand he held was thinking of an object that lay to the north of it, Trim found that the hand could be moved more easily toward the north than toward the south, east or west.

He also noticed that the hand would twitch a little whenever he came near the hidden object.

He experimented a good deal along this line and soon found that he could do almost any of Bishop's tricks by this method of reading the muscles.

For a time Trim amused himself and his companions by this kind of sport, but finally tired of it and for years he had not given the matter a thought.

Now he found that he was just as expert as ever in it, and all he was working for in giving this entertainment was to get an opportunity of experimenting with a certain person in the audience in a way and for a purpose that will be shown later.

It is not quite true that anybody could do this muscle reading, for it is not everybody who has such a quick mind as Trim had to judge by the feeling of a person's hand what was going on in his thoughts.

When the men came back to report that they had hidden an object one of them said:

"We found an open carriage just in front of the hall and engaged that. The driver wasn't known to any of us and we'll guarantee that he isn't known to you."

"That's what I want," said Trim, "but in any case you must blindfold me and to make things more secure, you will put a bandbox over my head."

It took some time to do this, but when it was all done, Trim was led out of the hall by the committee and most of the audience followed.

The committee helped the "professor" into the open carriage and at his request the four who had hidden the article got into the carriage with him.

Two sat opposite him on the front seat while he sat with the two others on the rear seat.

"If I had four hands," he said, "I should want to grasp a fist of each of you, but as I have only two I will start by taking hold of the hands nearest me."

He therefore clasped the hands of the men who sat beside him and after moving them up and down and sideways for a second or two he said, sharply:

"Turn the carriage around!"

Blindfolded as he was he could not see that the men in the carriage looked at each other in surprise.

The fact was that when Trim entered the carriage it was facing in a direction opposite to that taken by the men when they started to hide the article.

The directions were given to the driver

who immediately turned around and then stopped to learn what was to come next.

"Drive on!" said Trim.

The man did so at a slow pace, while several of the audience got into other carriages and followed, thus making quite a procession in the streets.

Presently Trim called suddenly:

"Turn to the right!"

The driver did so and went up one of the steep Kansas City hills to a bluff overlooking the river.

It was slow work going up the hill and two or three times Trim called to his companions sharply to keep their minds upon the hidden object.

When they were near the top he directed the driver to turn to the left.

This was done, but a moment later the detective called to him to halt.

"There's something wrong here, gentlemen," he said, "either you are thinking of two different places or the driver has not followed my directions."

"Well," said one of the men, "I was thinking of the exact spot where the thing is hidden."

"And I," said the other, "was thinking of the route we took when we hid it."

"That is the difficulty," said Trim. "Both think of the route and we shall get along all right; now, then, begin again."

He moved their hands about as before and then called out to the driver to turn around.

The driver began to back and to cramp the wheels as a preparation to turning.

The four men were so interested in watching Trim and following his instructions that they did not notice that they were at the very edge of a steep descent.

They kept their eyes upon Trim, every one of them thinking as hard as they could of the route they followed a half hour before.

Suddenly the rear wheels of the carriage sank and the vehicle started down hill, leaping the horses after it.

The driver had leaped from his perch and gone off on a dead run.

The man with whom Trim was sitting gave a cry of alarm and started to jump out.

The detective, suspecting instantly what had happened, sprang from his place, threw aside the bandbox and tore the bandage from his eyes.

Landing upon the very edge of the steep hillside he caught the forward wheels of the carriage by the spokes and pulled with all his might to keep the carriage from breaking away and going further down the hill.

The horses were plunging and rearing madly and one of the men still clung to his place in the carriage while the others had tumbled out and were now struggling to get up to the road again.

One of them who had more nerve than the others, caught the opposite wheel and working with him Trim managed to get the wagon back upon the roadway, then he jumped to the horses' heads and quickly quieted them.

"I knew this sort of experiment was dangerous," growled one of the men.

"It wasn't my fault," said Trim, "and the experiment isn't over; we'll conclude it now without the driver."

The detective had caught sight of the running driver and had recognized him as the man who had left the hall while he was speaking about the arrangements for the experiment.

"He thought he was going to get rid of me," thought Trim to himself, "by pitching me down this bank.

"He's a desperate sort of enemy, for he takes long chances. I'd drive after him and arrest him now if it wasn't that I need more evidence than I have got, and besides that I want to trap the woman also."

"You don't catch me in a carriage again with a blindfolded man," said one of the men limping away.

"I don't believe I want to try it again, either!" said another.

"I hope you won't all give it up," said Trim, because of that driver's clumsiness. You can see that it wasn't my fault."

"I don't suppose it was, but it's dangerous anyway."

"Well, then," said Trim, "let me show you what I will do.

"Blindfold me again and one of you get up on the driver's seat beside me and I'll do the driving.

"At any minute if you think there's danger ahead you can take the reins from my hand."

After some discussion this was agreed to by all except one of the committeemen, who had been too thoroughly frightened by the narrow escape to go on.

Two of them, however, got into the carriage while the third climbed to the driver's seat beside the detective.

Trim took the reins in one hand and with the other held the committeeman's hand; then he started the horses and when they came to a street crossing he turned to the left without a word from the man beside him.

He drove rapidly and avoided running into other wagons because he could feel from the man's twitching muscles whenever there was danger, and could locate the direction of it in the way described.

After a time the men who were with him felt as easy as it they were driving themselves.

It seemed to them as if Trim could see the way although they had no doubt that his eyes were properly blinded.

After many turnings he came back to one of the principal streets of the city and stopped in front of one of the principal buildings not far from the hall; it was a hotel.

Trim put down the reins and said:

"Here we are," and climbed down to the sidewalk.

The committeemen followed him.

Taking one of them by the hand he went straight into the hotel as if his eyes were open, led him along a corridor, up a flight of stairs, part way through another corridor and stopped at last in front of a room which after a moment of hesitation he entered.

Without an instant's delay he crossed the room to a mantel, took down a vase that stood there, thrust his fingers in and pulled out a diamond scarf pin.

The committeemen and the crowd of spectators who had gathered at the hotel clapped their hands and shouted.

Trim had found the hidden article.

CHAPTER VII.

TRIM FINDS THE LOST POCKETBOOK.

The bandage was then removed from his eyes and the whole party then went back to the hall.

Most of the audience had remained there during the search and the committeemen explained how successful the "professor" had been.

"That is the last exhibition I shall give to-day, ladies and gentlemen," said Trim, "but if any of you wish to engage my services for private work I shall be glad to make arrangements with you at the Midland hotel."

The audience began to leave the hall.

Several men gathered around the "professor" and asked him questions as to what he could do in the way of finding lost articles.

One man in particular was anxious that the "professor" should help him find a pocketbook that had been lost or stolen that very morning.

"Gentlemen," said Trim gravely, "when I exercise this remarkable power of mine it wears me out; I have to rest. I cannot talk business now—you must come to see me at the Midland Hotel this evening or to-morrow."

In a whisper he added to Gordon who had followed his proceedings throughout with great interest:

"I must look out or some of these men will be giving me jobs that I can't do and then I shall lose the effect that I have produced already."

"Well, if you can find a hidden pin," said Gordon, "why can't you discover a lost pocketbook?"

"When I get time to tell you how this thing was done," Trim answered, "you'll understand."

"I wish you would find that pocketbook for me, mister," pleaded the man who had spoken to Trim about it.

"It wasn't so much the money I had in it as some papers that are mighty valuable to me and can't be of any use to anybody else. I'd give a right smart sum to get that pocketbook back."

"Come and talk to me about it this evening," Trim responded.

The man looked disappointed and stood aside while Trim went down from the platform.

Most of the audience by this time were out of the hall, but going slowly after the last of them was the woman who had sat beside the man that Trim had later recognized as the driver.

She was evidently not acquainted with anybody there, for she spoke to no one

she went out, and in fact kept at a little distance from any of the others.

Followed closely by Gordon, Trim strode up to her and said:

"Madam, I shall be glad to see you at any time you wish to call. I'm not so tired but that I can attend to your matter right now if you want me to."

The woman turned deathly pale, gave a gasp of surprise and caught hold of a chair to steady herself.

"I don't know what you mean," she said.

"Oh, yes you do!" responded the "professor," quietly looking her sternly in the eye, "you know all about it and I know that you intend to call on me.

"You can come now if you like; if not, say when you will come and I will sure to be in."

The woman recovered her self-possession and looked around evidently to see whether anybody were observing them.

The only person near was Gordon, who, fearing to interrupt Trim's operations had turned his back and was pretending to look out of a window.

"I know who you are," said the woman in a low tone.

"Undoubtedly," Trim responded, "I am Professor Helm, the world-renowned——"

"You are Trim Carter, the detective!" she hissed.

"Indeed! Then you too must be gifted with second sight?"

"I know you!" she answered in a passionate whisper, "and I have had my eyes on you for hours.

"What you are doing in this disguise I can't understand; I will admit that, and I can see that you have wonderful power; but you shall not escape me!"

"No, I don't think I shall," returned the detective calmly. "Whenever you are ready for me to read your mind for you and show you your past and future I shall be prepared to accommodate you."

The woman bit her lip.

It was clear that she felt that she had said too much and that she was almost paralyzed with alarm.

Trim shrugged his shoulders and moved on.

He was joined by Gordon outside the cafe——"

hall and together they went toward the hotel.

"Now, Trim," said Gordon, "what in the world is that all about?"

"Did you hear it all?"

"I didn't catch everything the woman said."

"She said she knows me."

"Well, I told you your disguise——"

"Was intended to be seen through by her."

"Good gracious!"

"Don't you know her?"

"Never saw her before in my life."

"You're mistaken."

"Impossible."

"Think again."

Gordon turned around and looked back at the hall.

He had not really expected to see the woman there, but nevertheless there she stood at the entrance looking after the "professor."

"Now that you speak of it so confidently," said Gordon, "it does seem to me as if I had seen her face somewhere, but I can't make out where. Who is she?"

"Have you forgotten your journey from Chicago?" asked Trim.

"Of course not!"

"Do you remember the telegram that came to me on the train?"

"Certainly."

"You opened it."

"Yes, because the porter sang out your name——"

"And I didn't want the party who might be listening for that name to recognize the man to whom the telegram was sent. Do you remember that?"

"Sure."

"Well, then, somebody did look around to see who received the telegram."

"Great Scott! yes," and Gordon again started to turn around and look back at the woman but Trim caught him by the arm.

"I wouldn't look at her again," said the detective quietly, "that's the woman."

"I think you're right."

"I know it."

"And you think then that she's the one——"

"Who came so near murdering me by proxy? Yes, that's the one."

"Well," said Gordon, "why in time don't you take her in while you've got a chance?"

"Because I haven't got evidence enough yet."

"But I should think you would be afraid to let her out of your sight?"

"Why, old chap, that woman wouldn't let me out of her sight for a good deal. There's no danger of her trying to get away from me.

"The question only is whether I can get away from her!"

Trim laughed quietly and Gordon, drawing a long breath, said:

"Well, I suppose I'm thick headed, but I can't see through it all."

"You're not thick headed," Trim responded, "but you don't understand crooks as I do.

"Now why that woman has got it in for me is more than I can tell you; your guess would be as good as mine, but that she has got a perfectly desperate design upon my life is as clear as day.

"It is also clear that she has a confederate in the shape of that man who went out from the hall and hired a carriage, which he drove up for the sake of being engaged by the committee.

"He thought he could dump me over a bank somewhere and so kill me.

"That shows how desperate they are for he took long chances.

"It was their second attempt; the first being the one that nearly succeeded with you.

"Now they'll reason that the third time never fails, and anyhow they won't give up the job as long as there's a chance that they can do me.

"They were probably watching the hotel this morning to find out whether their operation of the night before had been successful.

"I know they were watching the hotel this morning for, come to think of it, that man who acted as driver was in the barroom when we made our round of the public rooms there after breakfast."

"I don't remember him," said Gordon.

"No, but you weren't on the lookout as I was.

"Now, you see, I was certain that they would find that they had failed in the first attempt, and I wanted to give them a second chance.

"I know they would take it, but not knowing who they were, it was necessary for me to get them where I could take a look at them, so, when you spoke of my power at second sight, I got an idea that I determined to try.

"I thought first of the public show which they might go to like ordinary people, then it struck me that if it was only a free show they might not care to take it in and so I disguised myself in such a way that they couldn't help recognizing me.

"I knew that they would be on the watch, and that they would see 'Professor Helm' around the Midland Hotel.

"I knew they would recognize this 'professor" as Trim Carter, and that they would watch him to see what he was up to.

"That made it certain that they would come to the hall, and I made up my mind that before I got through with my experiments I would manage to [illegible] or both of them.

"I have done it and having done it the only thing I can do now is to wait for their next play, and if I don't take the trick I deserve to be shot."

"Well," answered Gordon, "I think if I were in your place I'd run away; it seems like taking desperate chances to stay here and play against such people as that!"

"The chances are not so desperate," said Trim, "for there are only two of them; but you can see that it would be foolish for me to arrest them now, I have nothing but my theories and suspicions against them.

"A clever lawyer could get any judge to discharge them and then we should have the fight all over again."

"That's why I say I should run away!"

"And that isn't the way I do business."

"I see it isn't, but what possible evidence can you get——"

"Why, Charlie, have you forgotten that there is a key missing from the chambermaid's ring?"

Before Gordon had time to answer

Trim had leaped from the sidewalk toward the middle of the street and started across on a dead run.

At the same time a young fellow on the other side of the street seeing him coming, darted into an alley way and disappeared.

"Come on, Charlie," shouted Trim, "and judge this sprinting match."

Gordon did not need to be told to come on for he was already on the run, wondering what in the world was up now.

The running of the three caused a good deal of excitement in the street and not less than twenty men hurried after them into the alley.

The one whom Trim was chasing was far down the alley when the detective entered it.

He disappeared around a corner but the detective had him in sight again a moment later when the alley ended in another street.

As Gordon ran along trying vainly to keep up with his friend he heard cries of "stop thief!" behind him.

The fugitive was a good runner but he saw by hasty glances over his shoulder that Trim was gaining on him.

Accordingly he turned aside, suddenly opened a basement door and dashed in.

Trim was on the spot the next second and before the door was fully closed he had his foot upon the threshold.

Some one inside tried to shut the door hard and Trim's foot was crushed so that it pained him severely, but he stood his ground and put his shoulders against the door in an effort to open it.

Gordon came hurrying up and seeing what Trim was trying to do, made a rush on the door and between them both they forced it open and both staggered into the room.

There they were confronted by a rough-looking man three or four sizes larger than Trim who struck out at the detective with one hand while he reached toward his hip pocket with the other.

"That's a dead easy game, pardner," said Trim as he warded off the ruffian's blow and whipped out his revolver.

"It takes a pretty slick man to get the drop on me," continued the detective holding the muzzle of his weapon against the other's chest.

"You're a dead goner if you don't hold up your hands."

"Up they go," muttered the other, throwing both hands above his head.

"Take away his gun, Charlie," commanded Trim, still holding the revolver against the ruffian's chest and looking about the room.

It was a small room with no furniture in it except a plain wooden table and three or four chairs.

Gordon slipped around behind the ruffian and took his revolver from his hip pocket.

He handed it toward Trim.

"Keep it yourself," said Trim, "and plug him if he moves."

Gordon promptly cocked the weapon and raised it.

"You'd better sit down, pardner," said Trim, addressing the ruffian.

The latter dropped into a chair and with a glance to see that Gordon had the man covered, Trim strode across the room and threw open a door that he found there.

It proved to be a door to a closet.

Hiding in it was the young fellow whom he had so suddenly pursued.

Trim caught him roughly by the collar and dragged him across the room to the sidewalk.

By that time the crowds that had followed the chase had come up and were standing there wondering what it was all about.

A policeman was hurrying up attracted by the racket.

Trim turned his man over to the policeman.

"I saw this fellow in the act of picking a pocket," he explained, "and thought I'd give myself the pleasure of pulling him in.

"There comes the victim of the theft now," and he pointed up the street to an elderly man who was hurrying along as fast as he could.

The prisoner looked frightened half to death.

"So you thought you'd hide in Barlow's den, did you?" asked the policeman, taking the prisoner from Trim and giving him a shake.

"Is Barlow the name of the big stuff inside there?" asked Trim.

"Yes," said the policeman, "he's a fence and his den is a hiding place for all the small thieves in the city. We'd better take him in too."

With this the policeman blew his whistle as a signal to the officer on the next beat, and a moment later another policeman joined the crowd.

This one made it unnecessary for Gordon to guard Barlow any longer.

Trim promised to go along with the policemen and their prisoners to the station house when he saw the pickpocket drop something to the ground.

He leaped forward and seized it while the policeman catching sight of the same act prevented the prisoner from dropping something else at the same time.

The thing Trim picked up was a pocketbook.

The other article the pickpocket was trying to drop was a watch, and it was this that the detective had seen him steal from the old man who now joined the crowd.

"This pocketbook," said Trim, "was stolen earlier in the day and I shouldn't be surprised if it belonged to that gentleman there."

He pointed to the man who had asked him in the hall to trace his lost pocketbook.

This man had walked along behind Trim after the show hoping to induce him to use his powers of second sight for the recovery of the article.

It proved that this pocketbook did belong to the man and at the station house it was restored to him.

He was very grateful to the "professor," and nothing could have made him believe that Trim had not pursued the pickpocket because his second sight told him that the lost pocketbook was in the pickpocket's possession.

"You must have seen that pocketbook right through his clothes!" the man said, "and I'm more convinced than ever now that you've got wonderful powers of second sight."

CHAPTER VIII.

FINDING THE KEY.

Trim did not attempt to explain the thing to the man but accepted the reward offered for the recovery of the pocketbook and went on to the hotel.

It would not have surprised him if he had found the woman to whom he had spoken, waiting for him, but she was not there and he sat down in the writing room to wait, for he was perfectly confident that she would come before long.

"She's bound to make another try for my life," said Trim to himself, "and when she does I shall let her play her hand to the end."

"You'll have to be mighty careful about it," Gordon responded.

"You can bet your own life that I will."

It was early in the evening when a hall boy informed "Professor Helm" that a lady was waiting for him in the parlor.

Trim gave Gordon a significant glance and at once went upstairs.

The woman was there and at the moment she had the parlor to herself.

"You don't know me, Trim Carter," she began, in a low tone, the moment the detective stood before her.

"I expect to before long," he replied.

"You will indeed, for I have come to tell you. I can see that you have wonderful powers and I think that your exhibition here must mean that you are going to quit the detective business?"

Trim said nothing.

"If that is the case," she went on, "I offer you a chance not only for your life, but for great wealth."

"You're mighty kind!" said Trim.

"You don't believe me!" she exclaimed. "I can see that you know that I sought your life.

"I admit that to you here because I know that you have no evidence against me and——"

She hesitated a moment.

"And against your confederate," added Trim.

"You can't get him in any case," the woman said, "even if you should be so foolish as to arrest me now. I should never reveal to you where he is!"

"I'm not going to arrest you now,"

Trim responded. "I'm going to wait until you have shown me where your confederate is and until you have helped me find the evidence against you."

The woman paled and took a step backward.

Trim was on the watch for he would not have been surprised at any moment to see her lunge at him with a dagger.

"Then you haven't given up the detective business?" she said.

"I'm not saying one thing or the other about that," Trim answered, "but no man is going to stand still when he knows that there are at least two persons in the world who are trying to kill him."

"No; then let me tell you that you have every reason to fear me and that it will be better for you to do as I was about to suggest.

"I tried to kill you because you had twice captured my husband!"

"You don't say so!"

"I do. The man who was first known to you as John Dowd, and whose real name is Daniel Doane, is my husband."

"Oh! I understand it all now, then."

"Not all of it, Trim Carter, for you don't yet understand the undying fury with which I will pursue you."

"And I suppose," remarked Trim, coolly, "that J. V. Dent will pursue me with the same undying fury?"

"Dent!" she exclaimed, "you're not so foolish as to suppose that that is his real name?"

"Oh, no; I saw long ago that somebody had invented that name and sent me telegrams for the sake of inducing me to come to Kansas City.

"I came and here I am, now then, what do you propose?"

"It is this, Trim Carter. You have mystified us both by this strange exhibition of your strange power and if you had partners you could use it for the getting of great wealth.

"We started out to be revenged for we were certain that as long as you lived there would be danger for us.

"The way you came across my husband the second time made it seem likely that you would encounter us some time, but we would rather be your partners or your assistants than your enemies.

"Drop the detective business, Trim Carter, join us and we will swear to be loyal to you."

"Do you know," answered Trim, "that it is only a woman who could make any suggestion as that to me?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that if you were a man I should knock you down."

"Then you refuse?"

"I do absolutely, and I shall lock both you and your confederate up before midnight."

"Never!" she cried, drawing back and drawing a revolver from beneath her cloak.

This was mere play for Trim.

He stepped forward quickly, wrenched the revolver from her hand and put it in his pocket.

Fierce as she was her strength was like that of a child compared to his.

"Now you see," he said, quietly, "how foolish you are. I could arrest you now and have you locked up for an attempt upon my life; but I don't want you without your partner.

"You will take me to him now and I'll have the pleasure of landing you both behind the bars."

"I shall not take you to him!"

"Oh, yes you will."

"I'll be locked up first!"

"No, you won't like that; it would do you no good at all!"

"I shall not take you to him!" she repeated.

"Well," said Trim, "you're going to leave the hotel, I'm going with you and unless you want to be hauled in instantly you will take my arm and go with me as if we were friends. Do you understand?"

The woman's eyes brightened suddenly.

"Yes," she said, "I will go out with you that way."

Trim promptly gave her his arm and they went down the stairs together and so out to the street.

There he turned to the right.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

"I'm going to where your partner is."

"How did you know that this was the direction?"

"Second sight."

The truth was, of course, that Trim

had tested the movement of her muscles as he held her arm.

He knew that her mind must be on the place where her confederate was and he therefore could learn the direction as easily as when he was humbugging the committee in the hall.

She tried to pull her arm away but Trim held it firmly.

"I wouldn't do that," he said, "you'll be in much worse trouble than if you come along with me quietly.

"I shall take you straight to your confederate without the least doubt."

"Yes," she said, after a moment, "I think you would and I'll not try to resist your power."

From that time she walked without hesitation beside Trim until they came to a house in a quiet street before which the detective stopped.

"This is the place," he said.

Again he had distinguished the unconscious movement of her muscles.

She looked at him in a way that showed that she was half fearful, and yet that she had an evil purpose in her action.

"She has decided," thought Trim, "to walk me into a trap. All right, I've been in such traps before, and I don't think this one will give me any trouble."

A moment later she was unlocking the door of the house and they entered.

"Now," she said with a light laugh as she sat down, "here we are, where is my confederate?"

"I am not so much interested in that at this minute," Trim answered, "as I am in another thing."

"What is that?"

"Let me take your hand a moment."

She mockingly held it toward him and Trim grasped her fingers.

"There is one thing I want," he said, "quite as much as I do to find your confederate, and that is to find a certain key."

She started violently and tried to draw away her hand.

"No, no! that won't do!" exclaimed Trim. "sit still for just a moment."

The woman was trembling like a leaf and she turned her seat with a frightened glance about the room.

Trim, too, looked the room over.

It was an ordinarily furnished sitting room separated from the room beyond by a doorway hung with curtains.

This doorway was directly opposite the detective.

"Now," said Trim, and then he waited a moment as the woman shifted her seat a little.

She had been sitting so as to be between Trim and the curtained doorway.

This movement brought her a little to one side of that line, but left the detective still facing the curtains.

"In a moment," continued Trim, "I am going to lead you to the place where the key to room thirty-one of the Midland Hotel is concealed."

The woman was deathly pale. She opened her lips and tried to speak but was too agitated to utter a sound.

Trim meantime was moving her hand, experimenting with it as he had with the hands of his committeemen.

He saw that the muscles moved most readily toward the curtained doorway, and he was about to start up and lead her in that direction, certain that she would take him to the place where the key would be found, when he saw the curtains moving.

The trap into which he had been led then flashed upon him.

He acted on the instant, and if he had not been so quick, if he had hesitated for the fraction of a second, there is no doubt that he would not have left that house alive.

What he did was to drop her hand, leap to his feet, drawing his revolver as he did so and firing it at the same time directly at the moving curtains.

It was all done so quickly that he had shot before the man, whom he knew to be moving behind the curtains, had parted them.

The sound of Trim's revolver was followed by the appearance of a man who staggered between the curtains and fell to the floor.

A revolver which he held in his hand went off at the same instant.

The woman screamed and tried to grasp Trim's pistol arm.

He caught her around the shoulders with his left arm and dragged her across the room to the place where the man lay.

This proved to be the one who had acted as driver during Trim's experiment in second sight.

Trim's bullet had struck him in the shoulder, and while not being a dangerous wound had completely disabled him.

It was therefore an easy matter to control both prisoners, and in a short time Trim had them behind the bars.

The key to room thirty-one was found in the man's pocket.

Trim had learned so much about the two from the woman herself that there was nothing left to do in the way of an investigation after the arrest was effected.

He made the whole matter so clear to the police authorities that the chambermaid who had been locked up since early in the morning was promptly released.

Doane's wife broke down after her arrest and explained how their attempt at vengeance had been carried out.

The man was her brother and after he had induced Trim to come to Kansas City by the telegrams, she had dressed herself as a chambermaid and succeeded in stealing the keys from the one who had the care of Gordon's room.

She had been completely deceived as to the identity of the detective by the way Trim had had Gordon open the telegram on the train.

Her purpose in being on the train was simply to see who received that second dispatch.

It had been sent by her brother with the idea that a porter would sing out Trim Carter's name in the car and thus enable her to identify the man she was seeking to destroy.

In a large hotel like the Midland it would never be difficult for a woman in the disguise of a chambermaid to go about unnoticed, for there are so many employees that it would be hard to recognize a strange face among them.

This affair concluded the work that had arisen from Trim's undertaking to work for two clients at the same time as was described in "Trim's Combination Case," in a previous number of this library.

He had had enough of a holiday and after the Kansas City matter was finished, he returned to New York ready for new business.

[THE END.]

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